SOCIETY OF American Archivists

Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards

Quo vadis, EAD?

Current use cases - from single institutions to aggregators and providers of archival management systems

2021-06-04

Presenters
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TS-EAS

- Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards at the Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- Background and work covered in this presentation:
  - https://youtu.be/9NXNyx9py-I

Where you can find more

TS EAS
https://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-subcommittee-on-encoded-archival-standards-ts-eas

TS-EAS on GitHub
https://github.com/SAA-SDT

EAD publication
http://www.loc.gov/ead/index.html

EAC publication
https://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/

Our mailing list
EAD@LISTSERV.LOC.GOV

Reporting an issue via SAA
https://www2.archivists.org/standards/TS-EAS-report-an-issue

Standards revision

Annual rolling revision cycle for minor releases
(see more on GitHub: https://github.com/SAA-SDT/TS-EAS-subteam-notes/blob/master/rolling-revision-cycle.md)

Evaluate standards for potential major revision every five years following guidelines by SAA's Standards Committee
(see more: https://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section7/groups/Standards/Development-and-Review)

Presentations

Repurposing descriptive data:

PastPerfect, EAD3, & PHP

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bit.ly/umbcead

UMBC

SAA TS-EAD, June 4, 2021

Pro: Lots of access points

Collection level record in PastPerfect and PastPerfect Online
Collection level record in MARC - University catalog and Worldcat
Multi level finding aid in Word and PDF
Multi level finding aid in PHP

Con: Moving data between these access points

Limited extraction and reformatting options
Almost all description is done by hand - copy, paste, copy, paste, etc.
Lots of room for mistakes and requires very careful QC at each step

NHPRC Access to Collections grant, 2014-2016
"Implementing an EAD-XML compliant workflow at the UMBC"

Goals for the new workflow

- ➔ Collection level records for all archival collections
- ➔ Repurpose data across platforms
- ➔ Include creation of MARC records
- ➔ Minimize potential for future backlogs
- ➔ Make our work accessible and adaptable
  - ◆ GitHub: /UMBC-Library/EAD-XML
  - ◆ bit.ly/umbcead

Data guidelines and clean-up

Arrangement

PastPerfect field	Guidelines/Rules	Description level
System of Arrangement <System>	DACS: 3.2 System of Arrangement (Added Value)	Collection - Required
	All processed collections must have this field completed to the Series level (do not include sub-series). Include series number, series title, and inclusive dates. Unprocessed or accession level records should document any arrangement present when accessioned and/or if any arrangement work was completed when accessioned. May be used for item level records if applicable. Format as a paragraph, not a list. May also be expanded in the finding aid to include sub-series, or to display as a list, if desired. Assign series with Roman numerals and subseries with capital letters. Example: Series I. Series I.A. Series I.B. Series II. Series II.A.	Accession - Required
PastPerfect screen location		Item - Optional
Archive > Structure		Include in export?
		PastPerfect Online, EAD MARC
Description		MARC field
Outlines how the collection or materials being described are currently organized.		351 $a
Example	EAD tag	
Organized into three series: Series I. Personal, 1839-1994 Series II. Sun Papers, 1927-1995. Series III. Boordy Vineyard, 1933-1995.	<archdesc><arrangement encinganalog="351$a"> Organized into three series: Series I. Personal, 839-1994. Series II. Sun Papers, 1927-1933-1995. </arrangement>	

PastPerfect export to PastPerfect XML

PastPerfect XML transformed using XSLT:

- EAD-XML (EAD3)
- MARC XML

EAD-XML transformed using in-house batch processor to create PHP for online finding aid.

```
<date>1839-1995; bulk 1942-1989</date>
<earlydate>1839</earlydate>
<latedate>1995</latedate>
```

```
<unitdate unitdatetype="inclusive">1839-1995</unitdate>
<unitdate unitdatetype="bulk">bulk 1942-1989</unitdate>
<unitdatestructured unitdatetype="inclusive">
    <daterange>
        <fromdate>1839</fromdate>
        <todate>1995</todate>
    </daterange>
</unitdatestructured>
```

```
<table>
    <tr><td>Dates:</td>
    <td>1839-1995; bulk 1942-1989</td></tr>
</table>
```

XSLT

```
<!-- Separation of Bulk and Inclusive Dates -->
<xsl:choose>
    <!-- If bulk date delimiter (;) exists -->
    <xsl:when test="contains(date,';')">
        <unitdate unitdatetype="inclusive" encodinganalog="245$f">
            <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(substring-before(date,
';'))"/>
        </unitdate>
        <unitdate unitdatetype="bulk" encodinganalog="245$g">
            <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(substring-after(date, ';'))"/>
        </unitdate>
    </xsl:when>
<!-- If only inclusive dates exist -->
    <xsl:otherwise>
        <unitdate unitdatetype="inclusive" encodinganalog="245$f">
            <xsl:value-of select="date"/>
        </unitdate>
    </xsl:otherwise>
</xsl:choose>
```

Room for improvement: Subjects

<subjects>Universities and colleges -- History;
Universities and colleges -- Planning;
Schamp, H. W. (Homer Ward), 1923-;
Dorsey, John W., 1936-;
University of Maryland, Baltimore County;
Lee, Calvin B. T.;**</subjects>**

Thesauri information and XML tags not exported from PastPerfect. Requires hands-on clean up post export and careful review by the Catalog Librarian.

Single level / collection level records

1. PastPerfect Online (+ search engines)
2. MARC records in USM ILS
3. MARC records in UMBC discovery layer
4. MARC records in WorldCat
5. MARC records in ArchiveGrid

Multi level records / finding aids

1. EAD-XML files
2. EAD-XML files in ArchiveGrid
3. EAD-XML files in NLM consortium
4. PHP files (+ search engines)
5. PHP files linked from all single level records
6. PDF files for printing

For more information…

GitHub: /UMBC-Library/EAD-XML
bit.ly/umbcead

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THE TRUSTED OLD FRIEND: EAD 2002 and Special Collections Finding Aids

ADA NEGRARU, DEGOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

QUO VADIS, EAD? SAA TS-EAS, JUNE 4, 2021

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
Special Collections Libraries

- Southern Methodist University (SMU): medium-size private university in Dallas, Texas
- Special Collections within the SMU Libraries: DeGolyer, Bridwell, Hamon (Bywaters) and the University Archives.
- Types of materials: rare books, manuscripts, photographs, university archives, corporate records, artwork, mixed media, video and audio recordings, and others.
- Discoverability
  - MARC bibliographic records
  - EAD finding aids
  - Digital collections (digitized materials)

EAD 2002 Finding Aids

- EAD2002 adopted in the early 2000s; still in use
- Conforms to DACS
- Well suited for archival and research purposes (description and discoverability)
- Published by Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO) and harvested by ArchiveGrid.
- 370 finding aids published to date

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- **Collaboration**: Campus- wide EAD working group
- **Communication**: shared network drive, email, group meetings
- **Responsibilities**: finding aid creation; authority terms; revision; coordination
- **Workflow:** finding aid creation to publication

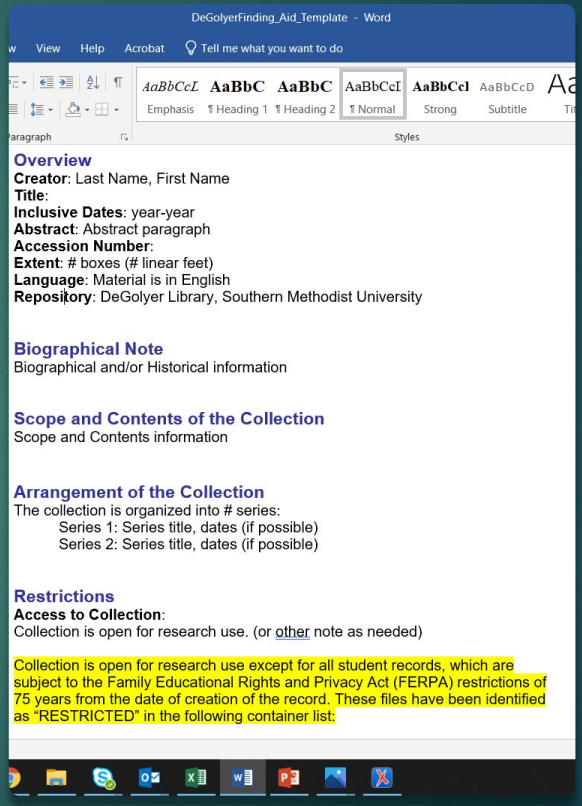
MORE ABOUT WORKFLOW

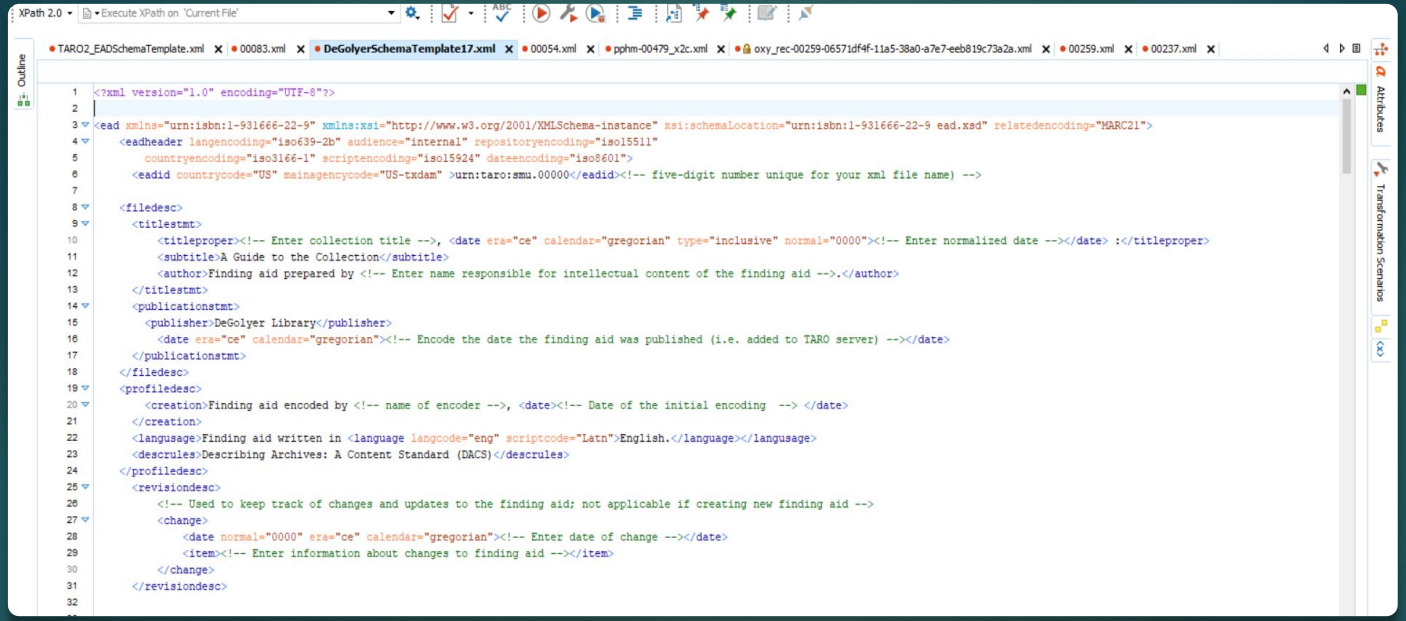
IT'S ALL IN THE TEMPLATE

- EAD 2002 used to create finding aid templates
  - Text documents : Word
  - EAD-DTD schema - XML template: Oxygen
  - Integrates well with state consortium: CSS stylesheets
  - All needed descriptive elements: Title, Creator, Dates, Identification, Language(s), Scope and Contents, index terms, other repository and collection specific notes

Finding aid template – Word

- Used by archivists, interns, student assistants
- Simple training process
- Enough depth for collection description and research
- Flexibility – can accommodate new institution policies (e.g. Sensitive materials note)





EAD2002 – DTD schema template

- Software: Oxygen Editor for Academic Use

EAD 2002 – DTD schema

- Created following consortium (TARO) requirements
- Adapted to institution needs
- Straightforward encoding
- In-house training process

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

- **EAD 2002 vs. EAD3**
  - EAD3 has been considered and evaluated
  - EAD2002 serves our purposes short to medium term

- **Why not EAD3 right now**
  - Too structured for our current needs
  - Impact on current templates and workflow
  - Impact on staff workload; collection processing, other tasks would be affected
  - Training costs
- **Potential reasons to adopt EAD3**
  - Linked data
  - User expectations
  - If required for continued participation in TARO, ArchiveGrid, NAFAN

From EAD to a Common Data Model

gregwiedeman.com/slides/EAD2021.html

Gregory Wiedeman
University Archivist
University at Albany, SUNY

My experience with EAD

- Learned technology by hand-encoding EAD
- Built tools to work with EAD
- Work with ASpace, ArcLight, Hyrax/Samvera
- Manage traditional archival processes
- EmpireADC advisor

The Promise of EAD

"An encoding standard would guarantee that the machine-readable finding aids created today would be usable tomorrow!"

Daniel V. Pitti, "The Berkeley Finding Aid Project," 1994
http://archive1.village.virginia.edu/dvp4c/arlpap.htm

One Final Format

- Structure your archival description
- Preservation format, future-proof
- Easily move data between systems

One Final Format

- Structure your archival description
- Preservation format, future-proof
- Easily move data between systems

We need to give up on this dream

Archival systems still limited

- ArchivesSpace and other successful tools
- Front-end usability is still a problem
- No archival system to manage digital objects
- Funding and sustainability are challenges

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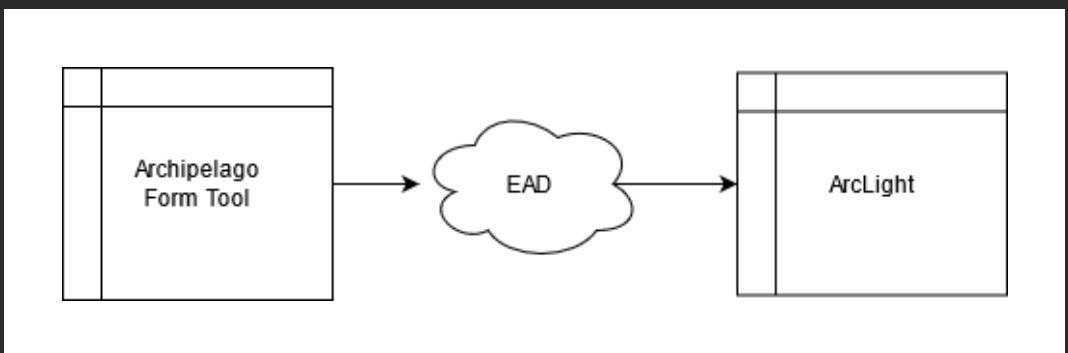
As the data structure standard, EAD defines how systems work with archival description

Hard to build systems with EAD

- Variability
  - `<unitdate>` within `<unittitle>`
- Mixed content
  - `<languagenote>`, `<title>`, `<date>`, etc.
- Designed with document in mind
- EAD3 is incremental improvement, adds more variability
  - `<languagedeclaration>`
  - `<unitdatestructured>`

EAD is a Lossy Medium

- EAD does not have strict rules
- "Migration" problems
- EmpireADC example:

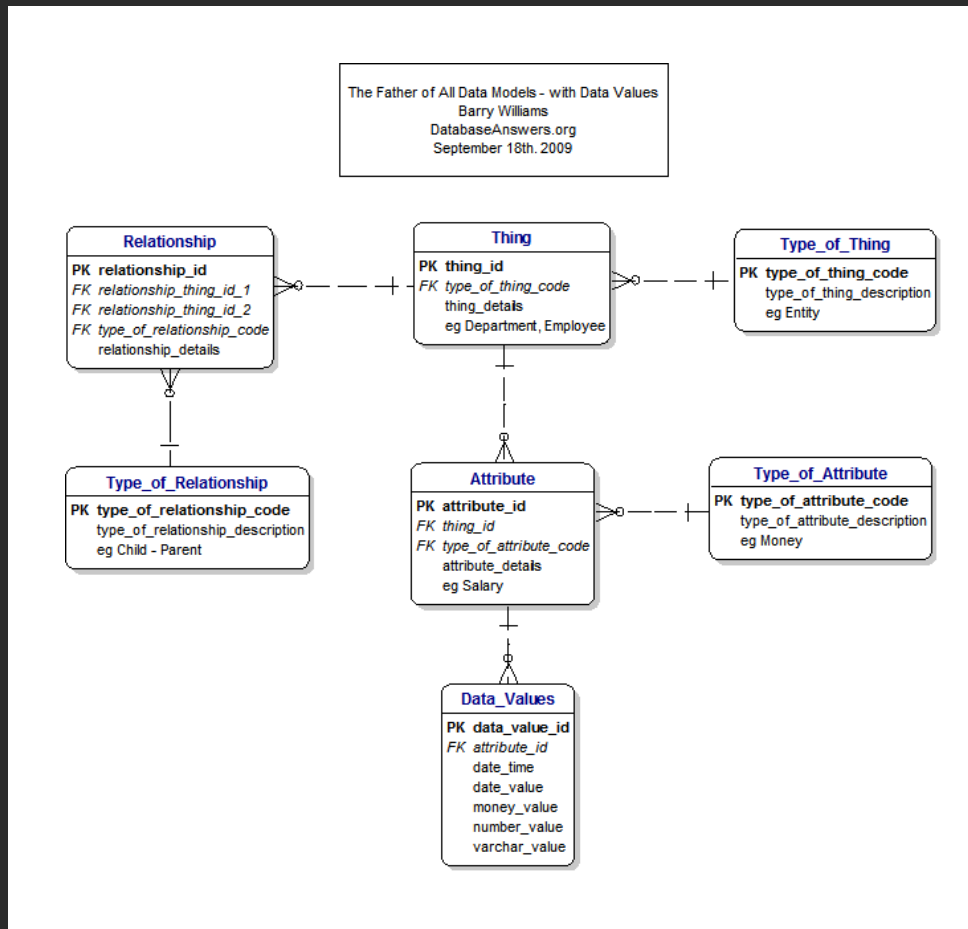


EAD is Limiting for Aggregators

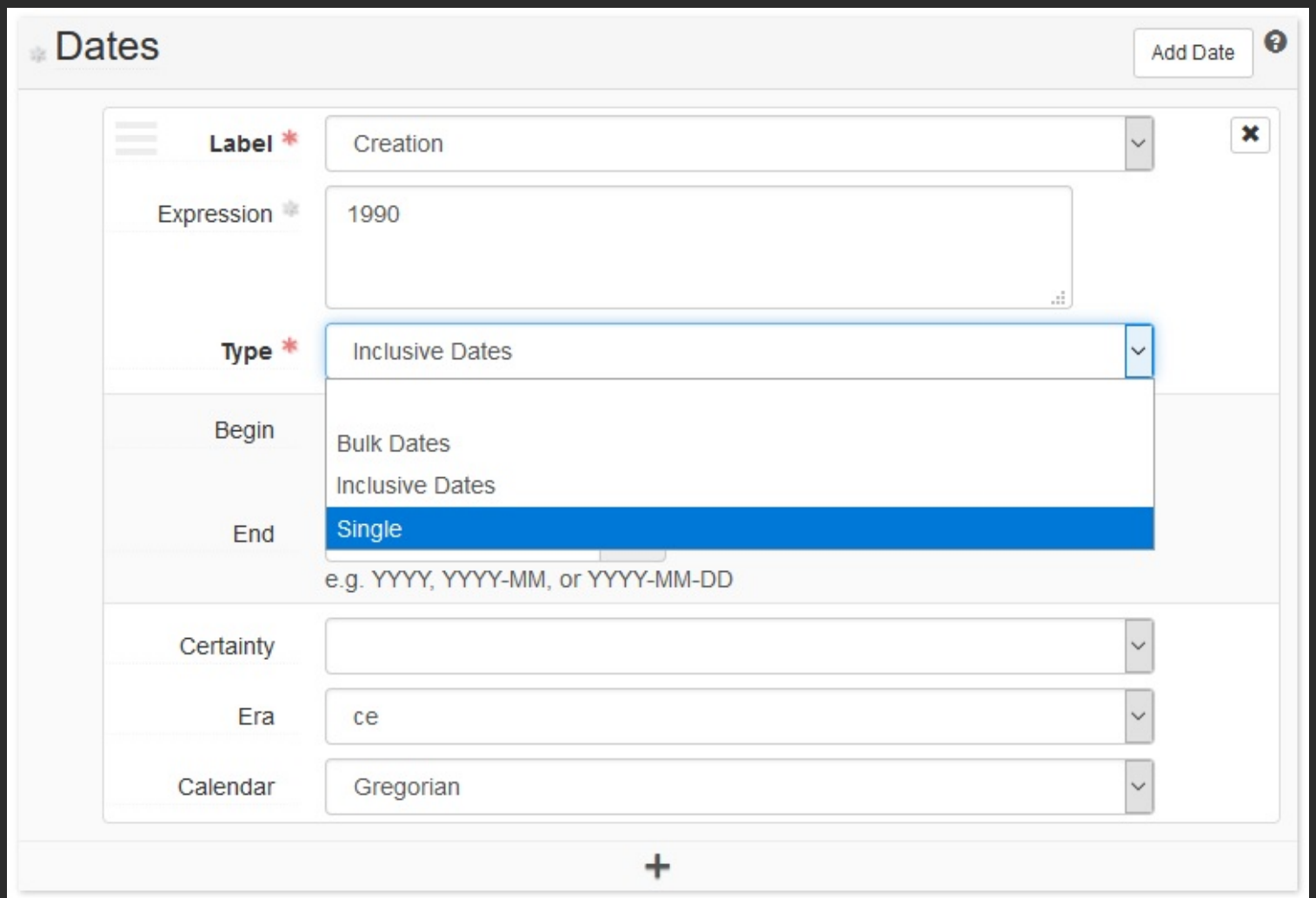
- "Raw" EAD is challenging to index
  - Hand-encoded
  - Custom authoring tools
- Requires skilled labor to normalize
- Aggregators need to rely on consistent EAD
  - ArchivesSpace
  - EmpireADC using Archipelago-based "form tool"

From XML format to Data Model

- Accept that description will live in multiple formats and systems
- Standardize data structure, not format



Date Problems

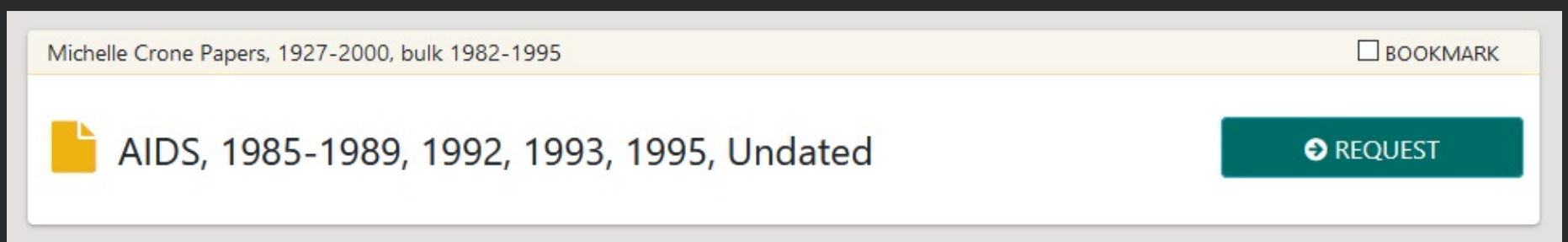


- EAD2002:
  - TYPE – not required. May be used to specify whether the date is “bulk” or “inclusive.”
- EAD3:
  - @unitdatetype – not required. Use to record whether the unit dates are bulk or inclusive. Possible values: bulk, inclusive.

ASpace exported "single" `<unitdate>` without `@type`

Date types in ArcLight

- Combines dates to Solr field: `normalized_title_ssm`



ArcLight Bug

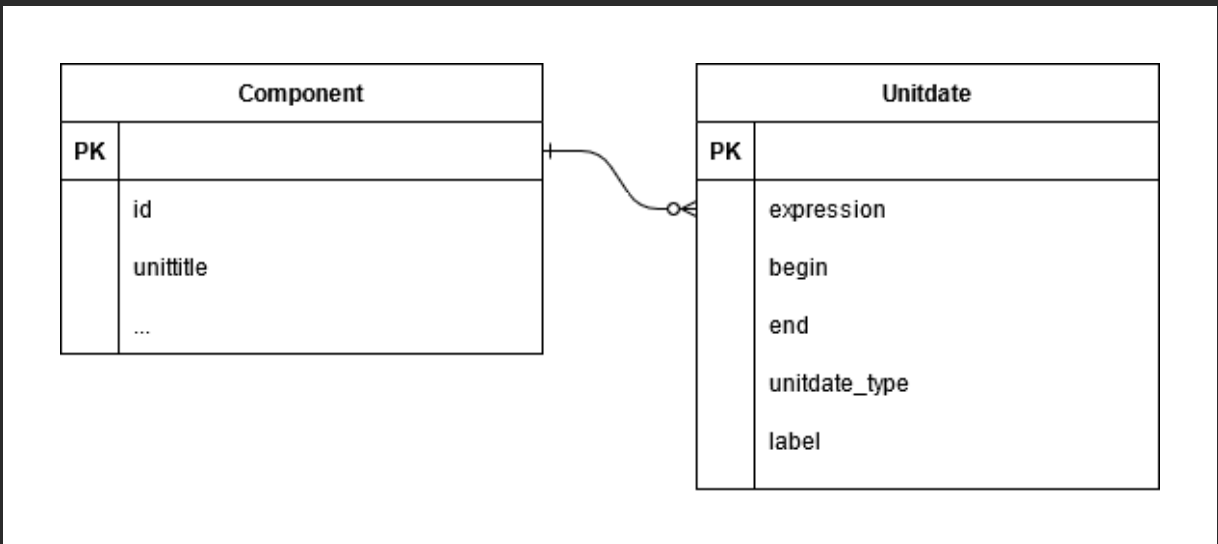
- Originally assumed one date
- then expected `@type="inclusive"` or `@type="bulk"`

General Administrative Files, 1965-1966, 1978-1990, 1963, 1994, undated

Date Problems

- Misunderstanding between tools
- EAD does not clearly define the structure of dates

Data Model: A Set of Rules



Expressed in JSON

```
{
  "expression": "1958 May 31-1960 June 2",
  "begin": "1958-05-31",
  "end": "1960-06-02",
  "date_type": "inclusive",
  "label": "creation"
}
```

Expressed in EAD2002

```
<unitdate label="creation" type="inclusive" normal="1958-05-31/19
    1958 May 31-1960 June 2
</unitdate>
```

Expressed in EAD3

```
<unitdatestructured label="creation" unitdatetype="inclusive">
    <dateset>
        <daterange>
            <fromdate standarddate="1958-05-31">1958 May 31</from
            <todate standarddate="1960-06-02">1960 June 2</todate
        </daterange>
    </dateset>
</unitdatestructured>
```

Serialization is easier

- Let the technologists deal with that
- Rely on common conventions for implementations
  - EAD2002
  - EAD3
  - JSON
  - Records in Context ontology (RiC-O)
  - Spreadsheets

EAD already relies on conventions

```
<extent>32 cubic ft.</extent>
<extent units="cubic ft.">32</extent>
```

More inclusive approach

- Migtation will be required at some point
- Lowers cost of systems and integration
- Allows new possibilities for small repositories
  - Google Forms
  - Spreadsheets
- Allows broader professional participation

From EAD to a Common Data Model

gregwiedeman.com/slides/EAD2021.html

Gregory Wiedeman
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Thanks!

- The recording will be available on YouTube:

  https://www.youtube.com/user/saastaff

- Feedback? Suggestions for ...? Please complete our survey!

  http://bit.ly/eadwebinar